



Congressman

BOB MENENDEZ

Legislative Update



Spring 2003

Dear Friend:

As your representative in Washington, one of my responsibilities is to ensure that Jersey City receives its fair share of federal funding. As a member of the House Leadership, I have worked closely with local leaders, concerned citizens, and educators to obtain funding for a number of worthwhile projects that will benefit you, your family, and your community.

Community Safety

Since being elected to Congress, it has been a priority of mine to improve safety in our communities. Over the past six years, I have helped secure more than \$12 million from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) for Jersey City. This money has been used to hire over 100 new police officers, provide officer training to improve interactions with communities, and obtain equipment and support systems.

Most recently, in September of 2002, the COPS Office awarded \$1.125 million in grants to Jersey City to hire nine full time police officers to work in local schools. The officers hired through this program are in our schools to protect our children and to serve as mentors and positive role models for our children.

In addition, I was able to secure \$12.45 million in federal funding to help the Jersey City Police Department upgrade their public safety communication systems. This money will replace an old analog radio infrastructure with a new digital trunking system that will provide needed interoperability between the Jersey City Police and Fire Departments and other Jersey City public safety or service agencies. In times of emergency, it is vitally important that those first responders who risk their lives for our safety be able to communicate with each other without fear of interruption.

As you may already know, this March I voted in support of increased funding for homeland security -- funding that would have provided an additional \$7.5 million for New Jersey's first responders and critical infrastructure. Unfortunately, this legislation was blocked by Republicans and did not pass. However, I have not given up this fight. This past month, in partnership with Senator Lautenberg, I introduced new federal legislation, known as the "State and Local Reservist First Responders Assistance Act of 2003." This bill would assist local governments with the costs incurred when local first responders serving in the National Guard and Reserves are called to active duty. Please be assured that I will continue to work tirelessly to provide the necessary funding for our first responders to ensure safety in our communities.

I look forward to continuing my work here in Washington to secure the funds necessary to protect our communities so that our children and future generations will be able to grow up in a safe environment.

Education

Education is another important priority that I have focused on during my time in the House of Representatives. It is the most valuable resource we have to prepare our children to be successful and productive citizens, and to prepare the nation to compete in the global environment. We need to take proper measures to assure that our children are prepared to succeed.

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Since 1999, I have helped secure more than \$12.3 million in Head Start funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the Jersey City Child Development Centers. This money has been utilized to fund Head Start programs to further bolster the school readiness of young children. As you may know, Head Start is a comprehensive child development program for preschool children from low-income families. Children who attend Head Start participate in a variety of educational activities. They also receive free medical and dental care, have healthy meals and snacks, and enjoy playing indoors and outdoors in a safe setting. Head Start programs provide the initial building blocks that lay the foundation for our children's future.

Congress and the President enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) last year. The NCLB focuses on improving education quality by emphasizing achievement, accountability, and quality in exchange for significantly increased resources. But now, the Administration is failing to provide the full funding required. Without adequate resources, the real reform that NCLB is meant to create is not possible. Therefore, I am working with my colleagues in Congress to keep the promise made to fully fund these obligations.

As the former Chairman of the Democratic Task Force on Education, I will continue my efforts to secure funding for our children's education and vital programs such as Head Start to ensure that our children develop the skills they need for success and a brighter future. You can be assured that I will continue to support all legislation which aims to provide and increase educational opportunities for students. I am committed to strengthening America's educational system and maximizing our children's opportunities.

Hopefully, you will find this update useful and informative. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if we may be of assistance to you on these or any other issues in the future.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

Official Business


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This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense.

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